

The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

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TWENTY-FOURTH EPISODE

SHADOWS OF WAR.

It was a day or two after the escape of Wu Fang and Inez. Kennedy had Chase and another detective, whom he frequently employed on routine matters, at work over the clues developed by his use of the sphygmograph. Elaine, anxious for news, had dropped in on us at the laboratory just as Kennedy was hastily opening his mail.

Craig came to a large letter with an official look, slit open the envelope, and unfolded the letter. "Hurrah!" he cried, jumping up and thrusting the letter before us. "Read that."

Across the top of the paper were embossed in blue the formidable words:

United States Navy Department,
Washington, D. C.

The letter was interesting:

Professor Craig Kennedy:

The University, New York City.

Dear Sir—Your teleautomatic torpedo model was tested yesterday and I take great pleasure in stating that it was entirely successful. There is no doubt that the United States is safe from attack as long as we retain its secret. Very sincerely yours,
DANIEL WATERS,

Assistant Secretary.

"When are we going to see the wonderful invention, Craig?" I added as I grasped his hand and, in return, he almost broke the bones in mine wringing it.

"As soon as you wish," he replied, moving over to the safe near by and opening it. "Here's the only other model in existence besides the model I sent to Washington."

He held up before us a cigar-shaped affair of steel, about eight inches long, with a tiny propeller and rudder of a size to correspond. Above was a series of wires four or five inches in length, which, he explained, were the aerials by which the torpedo was controlled.

"The principle of the thing," he went on proudly, "is that I use wireless waves to actuate relays on the torpedo; the relay releases it. That is, I send a child with a message; the grown man, through the relay, does the work. So, you see, I can sit miles away in safety and send my little David out anywhere to strike down a huge Goliath."

He had scarcely finished his brief description when there came a knock at the door. I answered it. It was Chase and his assistant.

"We've found the place on Pen street," they reported excitedly. "It's No. 14, as you thought. We've left an operative disguised as a blind beggar to watch the place."

Half an hour later we turned into Chinatown from the shadow of the elevated railroad on Chatham square, doing our best to affect a Bowery slouch.

We had not gone far before we came to the blind beggar. He was sitting by No. 14 with a sign on his breast, grinding industriously at a small barrel organ before him on which rested a tin cup. We passed him and Kennedy took out a coin from his pocket and dropped it into the cup. As he did so he thrust his hand into the cup and quickly took out a piece of paper which he palmed.

The blind beggar thanked and blessed us, and we dodged into a doorway, where Kennedy opened the paper and read: "Wu Fang gone out."

We had scarcely mounted the stairs to the den of the Serpent when a servant in a back room, hearing a noise, stuck his head in the door. Kennedy and I made a dash at him, and quickly overpowered him, snapping the bracelets on his wrists.

"Watch him, Walter," directed Craig as he made his way into the back room.

In the devious plots and schemes of Wu Fang, his nefarious work had brought him into contact not only with criminals of the lowest order, but with those high up in financial and diplomatic circles.

Thus it happened that at such a crisis as Kennedy had brought about for him Wu had suddenly been called out of the city and had received an order from a group of powerful foreign agents known secretly as the Intelligence Office, to meet an emissary at a certain rocky promontory on the Connecticut shore of Long Island sound the very day after Kennedy's little affair with him in the laboratory and the day before the letter from Washington arrived.

There on the rocky shore, he sat gazing out at the waves, waiting, when suddenly, from around the promontory, came a boat rowed by two stalwart sailors. It carried as passengers two dark-complexioned, dark-haired men, foreigners evidently, though carefully dressed so as to conceal both their identity and nationality.

As the boat came up to a strip of sandy beach among the rocks, the sailors held it while their two passengers jumped out. Then they rowed away as quickly as they had come.

The two mysterious strangers saluted Wu. "We are under orders from the intelligence office," introduced one who seemed to be the leader, "to get this American, Kennedy."

"Information has just come to us," the stranger went on, "that Kennedy has invented a new wireless automatic torpedo. Already a letter is on its way informing him that it has been accepted by the navy."

The other man, who had been drawing a cigar-shaped outline on the wet sand, looked up. "We must get those models," he put in, adding, "both of them—the one he has and that the government has. Can it be done?"

"I can get them," answered Wu sinisterly.

And so, while Kennedy was drawing near together the net about Wu, that wily criminal had already planned an attack on him in an unexpected quarter.

Down in Washington the very morning that our pursuit of Wu came to a head, the officials of the navy department, both naval and civil, were having the final conference at which they were to accept officially Kennedy's marvelous invention, which it was confidently believed, would ultimately make war impossible.

Seated about a long table in one of the board rooms were not only the officers but the officials of the department whose sanction was necessary for the final step. By a window sat a woman stenographer, who was transcribing the notes of the momentous meeting.

They had just completed the examination of the torpedo and laid it on the end of the table scarcely an arm's length from the stenographer. As she finished a page of notes she glanced quickly at a watch on her wrist. It was exactly three o'clock.

Hastily she reached over for the torpedo and with one swift, silent movement tossed it out of the window.

Down below, in a clump of rhododendrons, for several moments had been crouching one of the men who had borne the orders to Wu Fang at the strange meeting on the promontory.

His eyes seemed riveted at the window above him. Suddenly the supreme moment for which this dastardly plot had been timed came. As the torpedo model dropped from the window, he darted forward, caught it, turned and in an instant he was gone.

Wu Fang himself had returned after setting in motion the forces which he found necessary to call to aid the foreign agents in their plots against Kennedy's torpedo.

As Wu approached the door of his den and was about to enter, his eyes fell on our outpost, the blind beggar. Instantly his suspicions were aroused. He looked the beggar over, with a frown, thought a moment, then turned and instead of entering went up the street.

He made the circuit of the block and now came to an alley on the next street that led back to the building in which he had his den. Still frowning, he gazed about, saw that he was not followed, and entered a doorway.

Up the stairs he made his way until he came to an empty loft. Quickly he went over to the blank wall and began feeling cautiously about as if for a secret spring hidden in the plaster.

"No one in the back room," said Kennedy, rejoining me in the den itself with the prisoner. "He's out, all right."

Before Craig was a mirror. As he looked into it, at an angle, he could see a part of the decorations of the wall behind him actually open out. For an instant the evil face of Wu Fang appeared.

Without a word, Craig walked into the back room. As he did so, Wu Fang knife in hand, stealthily opened the sliding panel its full length and noiselessly entered the room behind me. With knife upraised for instant action, he moved closer and closer to me. He had almost reached me and paused to gloat as he poised the knife

ready to strike, when I heard a shout from Kennedy and a scuffle.

Craig had leaped out from behind a screen near the doorway to the back room where he had hidden to lure Wu on. With a powerful grasp he twisted the knife from Wu's hand and it fell with a clatter on the floor. I was at Wu myself an instant later. He was a powerful fighter, but we managed to snap the handcuffs on him finally, also.

"Walter," panted Kennedy, straightening himself out after the fracas, "I'll stay here with the prisoners. Go get the police."

I hurried out and rushed down the street seeking an officer.

Up in the den, Wu Fang, silent, stood with his back to the wall, scowling sullenly. Close beside him hung a sort of bell cord, just out of reach. Kennedy, revolver in hand, was examining the writing table to discover whatever evidence he could. Slowly, imperceptibly, inch by inch, Wu moved toward the bell cord. He was reaching out with his manacled hands to seize it when Kennedy, alert, turned, saw him, and instantly shot. Wu literally crumpled up and dropped to the floor as Craig bounded over to him.

By this time I had found a policeman and he had summoned the wagon from the Elizabeth street station, a few blocks away. As we drove up before the den, I leaped out and the police followed.

Imagine my surprise at seeing Wu stretched on the floor; Kennedy had tried to stanch the flow of blood from a wound on Wu's shoulder with a handkerchief and now was making a temporary bandage which he bound on him.

"How are you, sergeant?" nodded Kennedy. "Well, I guess you'll admit I made good this time."

Common humanity dictated that we take Wu first of all to a hospital and get him fixed up, and to a hospital we went. Kennedy and I entered with our prisoners, closely guarded by the police.

Craig handed Wu over to two young doctors and a nurse. By this time Wu was very weak from loss of blood. Still he had his iron nerve and that was carrying him through. The two young doctors and the nurse had scarcely begun to take off Craig's rude bandage to replace it properly when a noise outside told us that a weeping and gesticulating delegation of Chinese had arrived.

Kennedy by this time had finished talking to the doctors and handing Wu over to them. They had taken him into a room in the dispensary. Just then the chattering crowd pushed in, some asking questions, others bewailing the fate of the great Wu Fang. They were so insistent that at last one of the doctors was forced to demand that the police drive them out. They started to push them back.

In the melee one of their number managed to get away from the rest and reach the doorway to the emergency room. He was, as we found out later, dressed almost precisely like Wu, although he had on a somewhat different cap. In build and size as well as features he was a veritable Dromio.

The other Chinaman drew back behind the screen which hid the doorway to the emergency room and concealed himself.

In the emergency room Wu was placed on an operating table and there was bound up properly, though he was terribly weak now.

Back of the screen, however, the other Chinaman was hiding, able to get an occasional glance at what was going on. There happened to be a table near him on which were gauze, cotton and other things. He reached over and took the gauze and quickly made it into a bandage, keeping one eye on the bandaging of Wu. Then he placed the bandage over his left shoulder and arm in the same way that he saw the doctors doing with Wu.

They had finished with Wu, and one of the doctors moved over to the doorway to call the sergeant. For the moment the rest had left Wu alone, his eyes apparently half closed through weakness. Each was busy about his own especial task.

From behind the screen, which was only a few feet from the operating table, the secreted Chinaman stepped out. Quickly he placed his own hat on Wu and took Wu's, then took Wu's place on the table, while Wu slipped behind the screen.

The doctor turned toward the supposed Wu. "Come, now," he ordered, handing him over to the police. "Here he is at last."

The sergeant started to lead the prisoner out. As he did so, he looked sharply at him. He could scarcely believe his eyes. There was something wrong. All Chinamen might look alike to some people, but not to him.

"That's not Wu Fang!" he exclaimed.

Instantly there was the greatest excitement. The doctors were astounded as all rushed into the emergency room again. One of them looked behind the screen. There was an open window.

"That's how he got away," he cried. Meanwhile, several blocks from the

hospital, Wu, still weak but more than ever nerved up, came out of his place of concealment, gazed up and down the street and, seeing no one following, hurried away from the hospital as fast as his shaky legs would bear him.

Confident that at last our arch enemy was safely landed in the hands of the police, Kennedy and I had left the hospital and were hastening to Elaine with the news. We stopped at the laboratory only long enough to get the torpedo from the safe and at a toy store where Craig bought a fine little clockwork battleship.

We found Elaine and Aunt Josephine in the conservatory and quickly Kennedy related how we had captured Wu.

But, like all inventors, his pet was the torpedo, and while we were absorbed in his demonstration of it as he floated it and the ship in the tank among the palms, Jennings answered a ring of the door bell and admitted two men.

"Is Professor Kennedy here?" asked one. "We have been to his apartment and to the laboratory."

"I'll see," said Jennings discreetly, taking the card of one of them and leaving them in the drawing room.

"Two gentlemen to see you, Mr. Kennedy," Jennings interrupted our congratulations, handing Craig a card. "Shall I tell them you are here, sir?"

Craig balanced the card. "I wonder what that can be?" he said, turning the card toward us.

It was engraved:

W. R. Barnes,

U. S. Secret Service.

"Yes, I'll see them," he said; then to us, "Please excuse me?"

Elaine, Aunt Josephine and I strolled off in the palms toward the Fifth avenue side, while Jennings went out toward the back of the house.

"Well, gentlemen," greeted Kennedy as he met the two detectives, "what can I do for you?"

The leader looked about, then leaned over and whispered, "We've just had word, professor, that your model of the torpedo has been stolen from the navy department in Washington."

"Stolen?" repeated Kennedy, staring aghast.

"Yes. We fear that an agent of a foreign government has found a traitor in the department."

Rapidly Kennedy's mind pictured what might be done with the deadly weapon in the hands of an enemy.

"And," added the secret service man, "we have reason to believe that this foreign agent is using a Chinaman, Wu Fang."

"But Wu has been arrested," replied Craig. "I arrested him myself. The police have him now."

"Then you don't know of his escape?" Kennedy could only stare as they told the story.

The crook fell back and dropped down behind the palms. Jennings looked about, but saw no one and stood there puzzled. Then the crook, fearing that he might be captured at any moment, looked about to see where he might hide the torpedo. There did not seem to be any place. Quickly he began to dig out the earth in one of the palm pots. He dropped the torpedo, wrapped still in the handkerchief, into the hole and covered it up.

Jennings was clearly puzzled. He had seen someone rush in, but the conservatory was apparently empty. He had just turned to go out when he saw a palm move. There was a face! He made a dive for it and in a moment both he and the crook were rolling over and over.

Kennedy and the secret service men were talking earnestly when they heard the cry for help and the scuffle. They rushed out and into the conservatory in time to see the crook, who had broken away, kneel out Jennings. He sprang to his feet and darted away.

Kennedy's mind was working rapidly. Had the man been after the other model? The detectives went after him. But Craig went for the torpedo. As he looked into the tank, it was gone! He turned and followed the crook.

It was a close race between the car bearing the two crooks and that which Kennedy had impressed into service, but we kept on through the city and out across the country, into Connecticut.

Time and again they almost got away, until it became a question of following tire tracks. Once we came to a cross roads and Kennedy stopped and leaped out. Deeply planted in the mud he could see the tracks of the car ahead leading out by the left road. Close beside the tire tracks were the footprints of two men going up the right-hand road toward the sound.

"You follow the car and the driver," decided Craig hastily indicating the road by which it had gone. "I'll follow the footprints."

The secret service men jumped back into the car and Kennedy and I went along the shore road following the two crooks.

Already the wounded crook, supported by his pal, had made his way down to the water and had come to

a long wharf. There, near the land end, they had a secret hiding place into which they went. The other crook drew forth a smoke signal and began to prepare it.

Kennedy and I were able, now, to move faster than they. As we came in sight of the wharf, Kennedy paused. "There they are, two of them," he indicated.

I could just make them out in their hiding place. The fellow who had stolen the torpedo was by this time so weak from loss of blood that he could hardly hold his head up, while the other hurried to fix the smoke signal. He happened to glance up and saw us. "Come, Red, brace up," he muttered. "They're on our trail."

The wounded man was almost too weak to answer. "I—I can't," he gasped weakly. "You—go." Then, with a great effort, remembering the mission on which he had been sent, he whispered hoarsely. "I hid the second torpedo model in the Dodge house in the bottom of—" He tried to finish, but he was too weak. He fell back, dead.

His pal had waited as long as he dared to learn the secret. He jumped up and ran out just as we burst into the hiding place.

Kennedy dropped down by the dead man and searched him, while I dashed after the other fellow.

When I returned I found Kennedy writing a hasty note.

"I couldn't follow him, Craig," I confessed.

"Too bad," frowned Craig, evidently greatly worried by what had happened, as he folded the note. "Walter," he added, seriously, "I want you to go and find the fellow." He handed me the note. "And if anything separates us today—give this note to Elaine."

Meanwhile, as nearly as I can now make out, Kennedy searched the dead man again. There was certainly no clue to his identity on him, nor had he the torpedo model. Craig looked about. Suddenly he fell flat on his stomach.

There was Wu Fang himself coming to the wharf, carrying the model of the torpedo which had been stolen in Washington and brought up to him by his emissary.

Kennedy, crouching down and taking advantage of every object that sheltered him, crawled cautiously into an angle. Unsuspecting Wu came to the land end of the wharf.

There he saw his lieutenant dead—and the smoke signal still beside him, unlighted. He bent over in amazement and examined the man.

From his hiding place Kennedy crept stealthily. He had scarcely got within reach of Wu when the alert Chinaman seemed to sense his presence. He rose swiftly and swung around.

The two arch-enemies gazed at each other a moment silently. Each knew it was the final, fatal encounter.

Slowly Wu drew a long knife and leaped at Kennedy, who grappled with him. They struggled mercilessly.

In the struggle Craig managed to tear the torpedo out of Wu's hands, just as they rolled over. It fell on a rock. Instantly an explosion tore a hole in the sand, scattering the gravel all about.

Relentlessly the combat raged. Out on the wharf itself they went, right up to the edge.

Then both went over into the water, locked in each other's viselike grip.

Even in the water they struggled frantically.

Suddenly I remembered the note. "Before I left him—the last time," I blurted out, "he wrote a note—to you."

I pulled the crumpled paper from my pocket and Elaine almost tore it from me—the last word from him—and read:

Dearest—I may not return until the case is settled and I have found the stolen torpedo. Matters involving millions of lives and billions of dollars hang on the plot back of it. No matter what happens, have no fear. Trust me. Lovingly,
CRAIG.

She finished reading the note and slowly laid it down. Then she picked it up and read it again. Slowly she turned to me.

"He told me to trust him and to have no fear," she said simply, gripping herself mentally and physically by main force, then with an air of defiance she looked at me. "I do not believe that he is dead!"

I tried to comfort her. I wanted to do so. But I could do nothing but shake my head sadly. My own heart was full to overflowing. An intimacy such as had been ours could not be broken except with a shock that tore my soul. I knew that the poor girl had not seen what I had seen. Yet I could not find it in my heart to contradict her.

She saw my look, read my mind. "No," she cried, still defiant, "no—a thousand times, no! I tell you—he is not dead!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

What Interested Her.

"Now, about this life insurance I contemplate taking out, premiums vary." "Premiums?" chirped his wife. "I want a plush-covered postcard album, John."